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# Commodifying Java Coffee: An Analysis using Spivak's Planetaryity toward Dee's *Filosofi Kopi*

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## ABSTRACT

This research aims to analyze how and why Java coffee depicted by *Kopi Tiwus* in Dee's *Filosofi Kopi* is commodified after Dutch colonialism which is inseparable from Eurocentrism ended in 1945 when Indonesia gained its independence. After applying qualitative research method with a post-colonial approach which involves collecting data in the form of words and analyzing the data by using Spivak's planetaryity as a post-colonial theory, it is found that the coffee is commodified through interaction between global agents depicted by Ben and Jody as owners of a coffee shop in Jakarta, namely *Filosofi Kopi*, and planetary subjects depicted by a middle-aged man with a strong Javanese accent who makes Ben and Jody know the coffee and by Pak Seno who sells it in a rickety hut in a rural area which is not far from Klaten, Central Java. Through the interaction, knowledge of features of Java coffee which is produced in smallholder coffee plantations on Java Island, Indonesia suggesting the country to enlarge its coffee plantations and to provide information and assistance of coffee cultivation technology to raise competitiveness of its coffee in the world market can be exchanged. The features are well-grown in a fertile land, the highest quality type of coffee, and brewed in a simple way which lead Java coffee to become a commodity to generate capital which can be globalized as well as European coffee depicted by *Ben's Perfecto* as Ben's creation together with a variety of popular espresso drinks. Made with espresso method and machine found and developed by Europeans along with other coffee brewing equipment and tools being homogenized in numerous cafes around the world, including in Indonesia, European coffee can be juxtaposed with Java coffee which does not require use of the machine and thus regarded as a different one. Novelty of the research is commodifying Java coffee without alienation of labor as Spivak states that planetaryity keeps homogenization and differentiation in alterity which makes planetaryity "in excess" of globalization of capital.

**Keywords:** *Spivak's planetaryity, post-colonial theory, commodity, Java coffee, without alienation of labor*

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## INTRODUCTION

Coffee is becoming an increasingly popular drink in Indonesia. It can be seen from the mushrooming of coffee shops in the country which serve espresso machine-processed coffee, pod one or instant one immediately after being ordered by its citizens. Their enjoyment of drinking it is encouraged by Indonesia as one of the world's top coffee producers (Edi & Mardiani, 2022, p. 13). Hence, coffee is deservedly a

prominent commodity in the country.

Existence of coffee in Indonesia can be traced to Dutch colonialism. Oppression which was contained in the colonialism initially encouraged spread of coffee on one of islands of Indonesia called Java Island in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century (Anam et al., 2023, p. 7). Coffee was grown in Pondok Kopi area, Jakarta (Panggabean, 2011, pp. 4–5). Along with its good growth there,

coffee was planted in Bogor, Sukabumi, Banten and East Priangan, West Java, which also grew well (Panggabean, 2011, pp. 4–5). Therefore, Java Island became the first and successful coffee growing island which was profitable for the oppressor nation.

Coffee from Java Island had its own popular name in the global market. Since Java Island was able to produce 2000 tons of mainly Arabic coffee which were traded by *Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie* (VOC) or the Dutch East India Company, flooded Europe and overtook Mocha Coffee from Yemen to take the top spot on the market, Europeans named the coffee from the island a Cup of Java (Asiah et al., 2023, p. 3). In other words, Java was used globally to replace the word “coffee”.

To maintain their domination in the world coffee trade, the Dutch expanded their coffee plantations outside Java Island. Coffee was grown in Sumatra, Bali, Sulawesi and Papua which had highlands with good soil fertility supported by good weather, so quality of the coffee was good and known to the global market (Rizwan, 2021, p. 11). Eventually, Java Island was no longer the main coffee producer in Indonesia as a Dutch colony.

After Dutch colonialism ended, the coffee plantations were still productive. They were nationalized by Indonesia which achieved its independence in 1945 (Rizwan, 2021, p. 12). Since then, the country has controlled coffee production and exports to other countries (Rizwan, 2021, p. 12). As one of Indonesia’s commodities, coffee can support the country’s foreign exchange.

In post-colonial period, coffee production in Indonesia is spread across ten provinces. They are South Sumatra in first place, Lampung in second place, North Sumatra in third place, Aceh in fourth place, Bengkulu in fifth place, East Java in sixth place, South Sulawesi in seventh place, Central Java in eighth place, East Nusa Tenggara in ninth place and Jambi in tenth place spread from western to eastern regions of Indonesia (Diskominfortik Provinsi Lampung, 2023). The leading coffee producing provinces in the country are mostly located on the island of Sumatra, though. Consequently, the word “coffee” is not as commonly referred to as Java (Benveniste, 2022) and popularity of Java coffee is fading.

In connection with that matter, one of Indonesia’s best-selling authors has written on Java coffee. In her short story entitled *Filosofi Kopi*,

Dewi Lestari, better known as Dee (2006), narrates meaning of popular espresso drinks and the one of *Kopi Tiwus*. She tells story of *Kopi Tiwus* to be brought by a middle-aged man with a strong Javanese accent to a coffee shop in Jakarta owned by Ben and Jody, namely *Filosofi Kopi*. After successfully tasting the coffee which is brewed by Pak Seno in a rickety hut in a rural area which is not far from Klaten, Central Java, they are narrated by Dee to return to their coffee shop carrying a plastic bag of its beans. Later, they set *Kopi Tiwus* which depicts Java coffee close to popular espresso drinks which depict European coffee which is most widely sold in coffee shops. It means that the short story contains commodification of Java coffee.

Regarding Dee’s *Filosofi Kopi* as a research object, Norva (2019) through his paper entitled *Tanda Budaya dalam Cerpen Filosofi Kopi karya Dee Lestari Tinjauan Semiotika Budaya Jurij Lotman* outlines contestation between western and eastern discourse through types of coffee depicting capitalism which is ended in defeat as well as contestation between modern and traditional culture which is won by traditional one by using Jurij Lotman’s cultural semiotic theory. Furthermore, Hudhana and Mulasih (2023) through their paper entitled *Budaya Konsumtif Perspektif Postmodern Jean Baudrillard dalam Novel Filosofi Kopi karya Dee Lestari* delve symbols of consumer culture which include coffee, coffee latte, cappuccino, espresso, Russian coffee, Irish coffee, macchiato, bush kettle, car importer, beautiful artist, Ben’s perfect, 50 million, barista, café, cinema, restaurant, cardigan, sofa, birthday, fitness, music box, telephone, BMW, and studying abroad by applying Jean Baudrillard’s perspective. Based on the literary review, the earlier papers do not illuminate commodification of Java coffee. Hence, this paper which sheds light on the commodification is original, interesting and important.

Departing from commodifying Java coffee whose popularity is fading in post-colonial period of Indonesia as problem of this research, two research questions emerge. First research question is how Java coffee depicted by *Kopi Tiwus* in Dee’s *Filosofi Kopi* is commodified. Second one is why the coffee is commodified.

To answer the questions revealing novelty of the research, qualitative research method with a post-colonial approach is applied. The method involves document study, so data comprises words (Creswell,

2013, p. 293) which are collected through recording, selection and arrangement (Sudaryanto, 2015, pp. 11–12). Concerning data collection of the research, first task is to record data from Dee's *Filosofi Kopi* as a primary data source and from print and digital books, research reports, and articles as secondary data sources referring to the research problem. Second one is to select the data which is necessary and third one is to arrange it.

The data is then analyzed by using Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's planetarity as a post-colonial theory (Abraham, 2011). Spivak, Fanon and Bhabha have contributed to postcolonialism's ever-growing body of theory and method connecting literature with formerly colonized country or society in which it is written and possessing no unitary quality (Bressler, 1994, pp. 265–267). In the society, globalization coexists with planetarity. Spivak (2003, p. 72) points out, "Globalization is the imposition of the same system of exchange everywhere". Linked to Eurocentrism which is viewed as the colonizer's model of the world (Majumder, 2017, p. 18; Shohat & Stam, 1994, p. 2), it is influenced by those whose power to control the world. That being so, she understands globalization as alienation of labor (Majumder, 2017, p. 17) which means that man's labor exists outside him independently as something alien to him and becomes a power on its own confronting him (Marx, 1959, p. 29). Accordingly, globalization deepens inequalities between social classes or nations (Majumder, 2017, p. 19) for it imposes the same system on the differences to strive for homogenization to retain the power.

Meanwhile, planetarity is against alienation of labor produced by capital (Majumder, 2017, p. 20). According to Spivak, planetarity invokes a relationship between man and nature that is "in excess" of globalization of capital (Majumder, 2017, p. 20). In the relationship, man lives on nature which means that nature is his body with which he must remain in continuous interchange if he is not to die (Marx, 1959, p. 31). Spivak (2003, p. 72) explains, "The planet is in the species of alterity, belonging to another system; and yet we inhabit it, on loan. It is not really amenable to a neat contrast with the globe [...] When I invoke the planet, I think of the effort required to figure the (im) possibility of this underived intuition." In other words, planetarity is embracement of differences which can be better than similarities. Therefore, commodifying Java coffee in post-colonial period which is supposedly

different from colonial one of Indonesia reflected in Dee's *Filosofi Kopi* can be analyzed by using Spivak's planetarity.

## FINDING AND DISCUSSION

### Interaction between Global Agents and Planetary Subjects

Spivak gives terms to those who stand for and those who do not really stand for globalization. Spivak (2003, p. 73) contends, "If we imagine ourselves as planetary subjects rather than global agents [...] alterity remains underived from us". That said, planetary subjects hold alterity, while global agents strive for likeness. However, they can interact as Spivak (2003, p. 73) notes, "To be human is to be intended toward the other". Their interaction occurs by the following routes.

#### The Interaction from the Planet to the Globe

The interaction is reflected in Dee's narrative below.

'First timer,' *Ben yang hafal semua muka pelanggannya berbisik ketika seorang pria setengah baya masuk.*

*Dari gelagatnya, aku menduga bapak satu itu tidak biasa minum kopi di kafe.*

*Dalam waktu singkat, Ben sudah menyuguhkan secangkir Ben's Perfecto.*

*'Nah, yang ini bukan sekadar enak, Pak. Tapi ini yang pualiiing... enak! Nomor satu di dunia,' aku berpromosi.*

*'Bapak memang hobi minum kopi?' tanya Ben ramah. Pertanyaan rutinnya pada setiap pengunjung baru.*

*'Kopi itu ibarat jamu sehatku setiap hari. Aku tahu bener, mana kopi yang enak dan mana yang tidak. Kata temenku, kopi di sini enak sekali,' tuturnya bersemangat dalam logat Jawa kental (Dee, 2006, pp. 15, 16)*

'First timer,' Ben, who knew all his customers' faces, whispered when a middle-aged man entered.

From his behavior, I suspected that the man didn't usually drink coffee in cafes.

In short time, Ben was serving a cup of *Ben's Perfecto*.

'Well, the coffee isn't just delicious, sir. But the

coffee is the mooost... delicious! Number one in the world,' I promoted.

'Do you really like drinking coffee, sir?' Ben asked the man kindly. Routine questions to every new visitor.

'Coffee is like my healthy herbal medicine every day. I really know which coffee is good and which is not. My friend said the coffee here is really good,' The man said enthusiastically in a strong Javanese accent.

The narrative contains dialogue which is concerned with human-human interaction (Strauß & Minker, 2010, p. 28). Humans narrated by Dee to be involved in the interaction are Ben, I who refers to Jody, and a middle-aged man with a strong Javanese accent. If the man is narrated by Dee to be noticed by Ben as a first timer and to be suspected by Jody to not usually drink coffee in cafes, the man displays unusuality which relates to difference (Damar, 2022, p. 4). That said, the man acts on behalf of those who embrace difference, so is viewed as a planetary subject.

A planetary subject supposedly comes from the planet where, according to Spivak, the unusual or the impossible could be imagined (Majumder, 2017, p. 17). It is contrasted to the globe constructed by convergence between capitals such as finance and technology (Majumder, 2017, p. 17). Technology which is associated with progress (Lenk, 2012, p. 204) as a result of diffusion from Europe (Wintle, 2020) is involved in coffee industry in the form of important equipment such as coffee maker (O'Reilly, 2014, p. 46). Invention of machine and method leading to espresso is commonly credited to a European named Angelo Moriondo from Turin, Italy, who received a patent in 1884 for "new steam machinery for the economic and instantaneous confection of coffee beverage" (Stamp, 2012). His machine was improved by other Europeans named Luigi Bezzerra and Desiderio Pavoni in the early 1900s resulting in the machine which people still use today (Stamp, 2012). Espresso itself is an Italian coffee beverage as well as way of brewing coffee (Sanders, 2021, p. 250), so popular espresso drinks such as café latte, cappuccino, Russian coffee, Irish coffee, and macchiato are aptly considered as European coffee (Rice, 2023; tasteatlas, 2023). If the equipment and the drinks can be found in numerous cafes around the world (Luca, Pegan, & Vianelli, 2020, p. 260; Orey, 2012, pp. 30, 35), the cafes reflect the

globe. Hence, Dee's narrative of the man displaying the unusuality shows a planetary subject who takes route from the planet to the globe.

The globe is where global agents supposedly come from. As narrated by Dee (2006, p. 1), Ben has traveled around the world and consulted with coffee brewing experts from Rome, Paris, Amsterdam, London, New York, and Moscow before opening his coffee shop, namely *Filosopi Kopi*, in partnership with Jody as his best friend who invests all his savings in it. If café owners are regarded as businessmen (Sahay & Chhikara, 2007, p. 118) and assumed to be managers of globalization (Amoore, 2002, p. 117), Ben and Jody who are narrated by Dee as owners of the coffee shop act on behalf of global agents.

When a planetary subject and global agents interact, an exchange takes place reflected in Dee's story below.

*Setelah meminum seteguk, bapak itu meletakkan cangkir dan kembali membuka halaman korannya.*

*Ben segera bertanya antusias, 'Bagaimana, Pak?' Dengan ekspresi sopan, bapak itu mengangguk-angguk, 'Lumayan,' jawabnya singkat lalu terus membaca.*

*'Memangnya Bapak pernah coba yang lebih enak dari ini?' Ben bertanya dengan otot-otot muka ditarik.*

*Tambah panik, bapak itu terkekeh-kekeh. 'Tapi ndak jauhlah dengan yang Adik bikin.'*

*'Tapi tetap lebih enak, kan?' Suara Ben terus meninggi.*

*Jakun bapak itu bergerak gugup, ia melirikku, melirik Ben, dan akhirnya mengangguk.*

*'Di mana Bapak coba kopi itu?'*

*'Wah. Jauh tempatnya, Dik.'*

*'DI-MA-NA?' (Dee, 2006, pp. 16, 17)*

After taking a sip, the man put down the cup and opened the page of his newspaper again. Ben immediately asked in enthusiastic way, 'How is it, sir?'

With a polite expression, the man nodded, 'Not bad,' He answered briefly and then continued reading.

'Have you ever tried anything more delicious than this?' Ben asked with his facial muscles pulled.

Increasingly panicked, the man chuckled. 'But it's not far from what you make.'

'But it's still better, right?' Ben's voice continued to rise.

The man's Adam's apple moved nervously, he glanced at me, glanced at Ben, and finally nodded.

'Where did you try the coffee?'

'Oh boy. It's a far place.'

'WHE-RE?'

The story shows that an exchange involves resources (Zinke-Wehlmann et al., 2022, p. 409). One of them is knowledge which has been widely recognized as the most crucial competitive asset (Lenart-Gansiniec, 2022, p. 236), including knowledge of coffee. The knowledge must be gained by a barista who is a skilled professional with a focus on brewing coffee (Maspul, 2023, p. 11). A barista must be properly trained to use a variety of essential tools and equipment to create high-quality coffee (Maspul, 2023, p. 13). With regard to the profession, Ben is narrated by Dee (2006, pp. 2, 11) to be one of the most reliable baristas in Jakarta experimenting with measuring cups, test tubes, scales, spoons and the like and succeeding in creating coffee which is assumed to be perfect. The coffee's name *Ben's Perfecto* which contains Spanish and means Ben's Perfect (spanishdict.com, n.d.) reflects European coffee. As stated by Spivak that one does not have to be a colonial European male to affirm importance of knowledge (Majumder, 2017, p. 22), Ben is narrated by Dee to exchange knowledge of perfection of the coffee to a middle-aged man with a strong Javanese accent as a first timer in the coffee shop.

However, instead of receiving the affirmation from the man, Ben actually receives knowledge of coffee which the man compares to *Ben's Perfecto*. As comparison can be used to gain knowledge (Hippel, 2012, p. 58), he is narrated by Dee to compare *Kopi Tiwus* to *Ben's Perfecto* and gain knowledge that the former is more delicious than the latter depicted by his reaction after tasting the latter. Based on the reaction, Ben is narrated by Dee to be aware that the man's knowledge is different from his knowledge, so he acts defensively. His act occurs as a consequence of alienation of labor when labor becomes an object which one can obtain only with the greatest effort which makes him fall under the sway of his product as capital (Marx, 1959, p. 29). In other words, the

object is believed by him to be perfect. If his belief is potentially wrong, he will display strangeness (Kraft, 2012) and hold observation which is very important tool in the hands of professionals (Palaiologou, 2012, p. 43). As a skilled professional with a focus on brewing coffee, Ben is narrated by Dee to ask the man where to find *Kopi Tiwus* to observe it. Thus, knowledge of *Kopi Tiwus* depicting Java coffee can be exchanged through interaction between Ben and Jody on behalf of global agents and the man on behalf of a planetary subject who takes route from the planet depicted by a far place to find the coffee to the globe depicted by *Filosopi Kopi*.

### The Interaction from the Globe to the Planet

Routes that allow the interaction are not from the planet to the globe only as seen in Dee's story below.

*Siapa yang menyangka kalau sisa hariku akan dihabiskan dengan mengemudi menyusuri jalan menuju pedesaan di Jawa Tengah.*

*Mata Ben seperti sudah mau copot mempelajari peta minimalis yang digambar oleh bapak malang itu—yang tentunya dibuat dalam keadaan tertekan.*

*Kami menginap di Klaten semalam.*

*Tepat di pengujung jalan, sebuah warung reot dari gubuk berdiri di atas bukit kecil, ternaungi pepohonan besar.*

*Di dalam warung, seorang bapak tua menyambut kami dengan senyuman ramah. 'Dari kota ya, Mas?'*

*Aku mengangguk, 'Dari Jakarta, Pak.'*

*'Jauh sekali!' Bapak itu geleng-geleng takjub.*

*Ben langsung duduk di bangku panjang yang tersedia, mukanya masih ruwet, 'Kopi tiwusnya dua.'*

*'Bapak ini Pak Seno, ya?' tanyaku.*

*'Iya. Kok bisa tahu, toh?'*

*'Bapak terkenal sampai ke Jakarta,' jawabku sambil nyengir, berusaha menyindir Ben yang sama sekali tidak merasa tersindir.*

*Pak Seno tertawa lepas. 'Walaah, ya mana mungkin!'*

*Di hadapan kami kini tersaji dua gelas berisikan kopi kental yang mengepul (Dee, 2006, pp. 18, 20, 21)*

Who would have thought that the rest of my

day would be spent driving along the road to a rural area in Central Java.

Ben's eyes were about to fall out studying a minimalist map drawn by the poor man—which of course was made under pressure.

We stayed in Klaten overnight.

Right at the end of the road, a rickety hut stood on a small hill, shaded by large trees.

Inside the hut, an old man greeted us with a friendly smile. 'From the city, young man?'

I nodded, 'From Jakarta, sir.'

'So far!' The man shook his head in amazement.

Ben immediately sat down on the long bench provided, his face still looked complicated, 'Two *kopi tiwus*, please.'

'This is Pak Seno, right?' I asked.

'Yes. How do you know, anyway?'

'You're famous all the way to Jakarta,' I answered while grinning, trying to be sarcastic to Ben, who didn't feel offended at all.

Pak Seno laughed out loud. 'No waaay, how is that possible!'

In front of us were now served two glasses filled with steaming thick coffee.

The story shows that Ben and Jody come from Jakarta. As the capital of Indonesia, Jakarta is the most prominent urban area in the country in terms of its population, economic growth and global connectivity (Rukmana, 2020). Appropriately, global agents portrayed by Ben and Jody come from the globe portrayed by Jakarta.

From Jakarta, Ben and Jody are narrated by Dee to drive along the road to a rural area which is not far from Klaten, Central Java. It refers to Klaten Regency and Klaten City as the capital of the regency which is located in Central Java as one of provinces of Indonesia (Daniswari, 2022). Distance between Jakarta and Klaten by car is 543 km or 337 miles and time to cover the distance by car is 416 minutes or 7 hours (2markers, n.d.). However, before toll roads were built, the time was 14 hours to 16 hours (Wijanarko, n.d.). Referring to the distance and time, Dee narrates an old man, namely Pak Seno, to say that Jakarta where Ben and Jody come from is so far from the rural area where he lives indicating that there is gap between urban and rural areas.

In general, rural areas are able to sell agricultural products and livestock which are

increasingly influenced by the global market (Ritzer, 2010, p. 403). However, being involved in globalization in whatever way, the areas are more likely than cities to be hinterlands and so excluded from global processes creating great inequality throughout the world between rural and urban areas (Ritzer, 2010, p. 403). Being unequal with urban areas where global processes take place, rural ones portray the planet.

If the poor man, as the same person as a middle-aged man with a strong Javanese accent, narrated by Dee to draw a minimalist map in *Filosofi Kopi*, Jakarta as a reference for Ben and Jody to find *Kopi Tiwus* portrays a planetary subject who does not stay in the planet, Pak Seno narrated by her to live in a rickety hut in the rural area reflecting the one used for habitation and serving the families (Attenbrow, 2010, p. 105) in hinterland reached by using map to not get lost (Rapoport & Savage-Smith, 2018, p. 228) portrays a planetary subject who stays in the planet. As portrayed by planetary subjects, global agents do not only stay in the globe, but also move to the planet. Therefore, they interact dynamically.

Through interaction between Pak Seno, Ben and Jody, knowledge of *Kopi Tiwus* can be exchanged as shown in Dee's story below.

*Matahari sudah menyala jingga. Aku menghampiri Ben. 'Apa lagi yang kamu cari? Kita pulang sajalah.'*

*'Aku kalah,' desisnya lesu.*

*'Pak Seno bilang, kopi itu mampu menghasilkan reaksi macam-macam. Dan dia benar. Kopi tiwus telah membuatku sadar, bahwa aku ini barista terburuk. Bukan cuma sok tahu, mencoba membuat filosofi dari kopi lalu memperdagangkannya, tapi yang paling parah, aku sudah merasa membuat kopi paling sempurna di dunia. Bodoh! Bodooh!'* (Dee, 2006, pp. 22, 23)

The sun was turning orange. I approached Ben. 'What else are you looking for? Let's just go home.'

'I lost,' he hissed wearily.

'Pak Seno said that coffee is capable of producing a variety of reactions. And he's right. *Kopi tiwus* has made me realize that I am the worst barista. Not only do I act like I know a lot, I try to make a philosophy out of coffee and

then trade it, but the worst thing is, I already feel like I make the most perfect coffee in the world. Stupid! Stupiiid!

After tasting *Kopi Tiwus* made by Pak Seno, Ben is narrated by Dee being lost. In other words, Ben has come to a decision that knowledge of *Kopi Tiwus* which, according to a middle-aged man with a strong Javanese accent, is more delicious than *Ben's Perfecto* is true. The narrative indicates that the decision is made based on observation involved in interaction which affects source of data (Lee, 2019, p. 1) containing knowledge. If the effect makes one's knowledge less true, he who holds ingenuity and rationality associated with inherent European qualities (Wintle, 2020) may consider himself stupid. Stupidity which sometimes happens to a smart one comes from his failure to use his cognitive abilities in pursuit of his goals (Hyman, 2002, pp. 2–3). In connection with it, Ben's stupidity is narrated by Dee to come from his failure as one of the most reliable baristas in Jakarta to understand that Indonesia has many varieties of good quality coffee (Redaksi Health Secret, 2012, p. 24; Rizwan, 2021, p. 11), so determining one perfect coffee is a challenging task. Nevertheless, failure can be viewed as a learning opportunity to be improved (Grabau & Swartz, 2014, p. 31). With the learning, one may gain improved knowledge as an asset linked to capital (Diekmann & Cloquet, 2014, p. 26) which can be shared with others through interaction. In regard to it, Ben and Jody's affirmation for knowledge of *Kopi Tiwus* being more delicious than *Ben's Perfecto* is narrated by Dee to occur through interaction between Pak Seno as a substitute for a planetary subject and them as substitutes for global agents who take route from the globe portrayed by Jakarta to the planet portrayed by the rural area.

### Features of Java Coffee as a Commodity

According to Spivak, social differences are obliterated to establish an equivalent relation between different forms of labor which can be achieved through commodities (Majumder, 2017, p. 19). If relation between global agents depicted by Ben and Jody and planetary subjects depicted by a middle-aged man with a strong Javanese accent and Pak Seno looks equal by virtue of Java coffee depicted by *Kopi Tiwus*, the coffee can be regarded as a commodity. Since commodity production is viewed as a means

to produce capital (Simpson, 2023, p. 18) which can be globalized (Majumder, 2017, p. 19), a commodity must have potential features in moneymaking (Sarris & Hallam, 2006, p. 4). Accordingly, the coffee has the features as follows.

### Well-Grown in a Fertile Land

The feature is reflected in Dee's narrative below.

*Siapa yang menyangka kalau sisa hariku akan dihabiskan dengan mengemudi menyusuri jalan menuju pedesaan di Jawa Tengah. Kami menginap di Klaten semalam. Tepat di pengujung jalan, sebuah warung reot dari gubuk berdiri di atas bukit kecil, ternaungi pepohonan besar. Aku baru tersadar, seluruh bukit kecil itu ditanami tanaman kopi. 'Tidak mungkin...' desis Ben tak percaya. 'Tempat dengan ketinggian seperti ini bukan tempat yang ideal ditanami kopi. Dan, lihat, mana ada petani kopi yang menanam dengan kuantitas sekecil ini.' '... Barangkali memang kopinya yang ajaib. Bapak ndak pernah ngutak-ngutik, tapi berbuah terus. Dari pertama kali tinggal di sini, kopi itu sudah ada. Kalau 'tiwus' itu dari nama almarhumah anak gadis Bapak. Waktu kecil dulu, tiap dia lihat bunga kopi di sini, dia suka ngomong 'tiwus-tiwus' gitu,' dengan asyik Pak Seno mendongeng (Dee, 2006, pp. 18, 20, 22)*

Who would have thought that the rest of my day would be spent driving along the road to a rural area in Central Java.

We stayed in Klaten overnight.

Right at the end of the road, a rickety hut stood on a small hill, shaded by large trees.

I just realized that the entire small hill was planted with coffee plants.

'Impossible...' Ben hissed in disbelief. 'A place at this height is not an ideal place to grow coffee. And, look, there are no coffee farmers who plant such small quantities.'

'... Maybe it's the coffee that's magical. I never tinker the coffee plants, but they continue to bear fruit. From the first time I lived here, they have been there. 'Tiwus' is from the name from my late daughter. When she was little, every

time she saw the coffee flowers here, she liked to say 'tiwus-tiwus' like that,' Pak Seno told us about the story in a fun way.

The narrative implies a rural area which is not far from Klaten, Central Java which, as well as Jakarta, is located on Java Island as the center of activity for all Indonesian society which makes the island have the highest population density in Indonesia and the world (Sugiyanto & Musoli, 2020, p. 193). However, economic growth is concentrated in Jakarta and its surroundings only (Kurniawan, 2022, p. 74) and thus perfectly reflects the country's profound inequalities (Rukmana, 2020). Even so, Klaten, Central Java and Jakarta are equally on the island renowned for its fertility (Sugiyanto & Musoli, 2020, p. 193). In accordance with it, Ben is narrated by Dee to state impossibility emphasized by Spivak. According to her, planetarity is an encounter with the impossibility (Majumder, 2017, p. 21). The impossibility includes inequalities and equalities in the same place such as Java Island.

Java Island's fertility has been contributed to coffee production in Indonesia. Under Dutch colonialism, the island was chosen by the Dutch to be their first coffee production base which, because of its fertility, makes them the world's largest coffee supplier in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century (Redaksi Health Secret, 2012, p. 7). As Eurocentrism linked to European colonialism, including Dutch one, is a form of vestigial thinking which permeates and structures contemporary practices even after formal end of the colonialism (Shohat & Stam, 1994, p. 2) which happened in Indonesia in 1945 (Hasudungan, 2021, p. 136), the island's fertility still exists in post-colonial period of the country. Indeed, Indonesia as the 4<sup>th</sup> world's top coffee producer after Brazil in first place, Vietnam in second place, and Colombia in third place (Rizwan, 2021, p. 12) shows lower coffee production volume than the other three countries (Edi & Mardiani, 2022, pp. 8–9). It is supported by the fact that 90% Indonesia's coffee plantations covering an area of only 1.24 million hectares are cultivated by farmers who have relatively small plantations of around 1-2 hectares (Edi & Mardiani, 2022, p. 13) challenging Indonesia to maintain its coffee production volume when global and domestic demand increase (Edi & Mardiani, 2022, pp. 8–9), even requiring the country to expand its coffee plantations

and to give information and assistance of coffee cultivation technology to increase competitiveness of its coffee in the world market (Rahardjo, 2021, pp. 3–4). However, the plantations are generally located in highlands gifted with beneficial soil fertility which significantly influences coffee growth and production (Redaksi Health Secret, 2012, p. 22; Rizwan, 2021, pp. 11–12). Such highlands can be found in Klaten, Central Java which is located between Gunung Merapi or Mount Merapi and Pegunungan Seribu or Thousand Highlands with a height of between 75 and 160 meters above sea level (Pemerintah Kabupaten Klaten, n.d.). Metaphorically, they make the regency as well as the city fragrant like *mlati* in Javanese which means jasmine included in the same family as coffee flowers (Kauai Coffee, 2023) which is named 'Tiwus' by Pak Seno's late daughter in the narrative. Hence, the regency as well as the city becomes *klati* in Javanese which means a frequent topic of discussion (Daniswari, 2022) suggesting its potential to be popular. Connected with it, Dee's narrative of Ben's disbelief on coffee plants with such small quantities planted in such place being able to produce *Kopi Tiwus* which is more delicious than *Ben's Perfecto* implies that Java coffee is well-grown in a fertile land.

### The Highest Quality Type of Coffee

The feature is reflected in Dee's story below.

*'Banyak sekali orang yang doyan kopi tiwus ini. Bapak sendiri ndak ngerti kenapa. Ada yang bilang bikin seger, bikin tentrem, bikin sabar, bikin tenang, bikin kangen... hahaha! Macem-macem! Padahal kata bapak sih biasa-biasa aja rasanya...' dengan asyik Pak Seno mendongeng. Setengah mati aku berusaha memahaminya. 'Oke, kopi itu memang unik.'* (Dee, 2006, pp. 22, 23)

'There are so many people who love *kopi tiwus*. I don't understand why myself. Some say it makes you fresh, makes you peaceful, makes you patient, makes you calm, makes you nostalgic... hahaha! Various! Even though I think it tastes ordinary...' Pak Seno told us about the story in a fun way.

I was half-dead trying to understand it. 'Okay, the coffee is unique.'



The story implies type of coffee which is suitable for growing in highlands, namely Arabic coffee. The coffee is well-grown at higher altitudes having cooler climates (Maspul, 2023, p. 8). Possessing geographical location with the altitudes and climates, Indonesia is the world's best Arabic coffee producer, despite not being the world's largest one (Redaksi Health Secret, 2012, p. 24). It happens due to the lack of sufficiently large coffee plantations in Indonesia producing around 90% Robusta coffee and 10% Arabic one which suggests importance of its plantation expansion (Rahardjo, 2021, p. 3) for the latter currently controls most of the world coffee trade (Billah, 2018, p. 78). Compared to Robusta coffee, Arabic one has a more complex profile in regard to its sweetness, acidity, fruit and floral notes which means that it is sweeter and more aromatic with less caffeine, so it is considered as the most delicious or the highest quality type of coffee (Maspul, 2023, p. 8; Redaksi Health Secret, 2012, p. 25). Out of many varieties of Arabic coffee, the variety produced on Java Island is a very famous one named a Cup of Java and taken as synonymous with Java coffee (Redaksi Health Secret, 2012, p. 10). Connected with it, Dee's story of a variety of effects after drinking *Kopi Tiwus* reflecting its uniqueness loved by a lot of people implies that Java coffee is the highest quality type of coffee.

### Brewed in a Simple Way

The feature is reflected in Dee's narrative below.

*Ben langsung duduk di bangku panjang yang tersedia, mukanya masih ruwet, 'Kopi tiwusnya dua.'*

*'Jarang-jarang ada orang Jakarta yang ke mari. Paling-paling dari kota-kota kecil dekat sini,' tuturnya sambil meraih dua gelas belimbing yang tertangkap di hadapan kami.*

*'Bapak terkenal sampai ke Jakarta,' jawabku sambil nyengir, berusaha menyindir Ben yang sama sekali tidak merasa tersindir. Matanya tidak lepas mengamati seluruh gerak-gerik Pak Seno membuat kopi.*

*Pak Seno tertawa lepas. 'Walaah, ya mana mungkin!'*

*Di hadapan kami kini tersaji dua gelas berisikan kopi kental yang mengepul.*

*'Gorengannya sekalian dicoba, Mas. Monggo.' Aku menyomot satu pisang goreng.*

*'Pak Seno titip salam. Dia juga titip pesan, kita tidak bisa menyamakan kopi dengan air tebu. Sesempurna apapun kopi yang kamu buat, kopi tetap kopi, punya sisi pahit yang tak mungkin kamu sembunyikan. Dan di sanalah kehebatan kopi tiwus... memberikan sisi pahit yang membuatmu melangkah mundur, dan berpikir.'* (Dee, 2006, pp. 20, 21)

Ben immediately sat down on the long bench provided, his face still looked complicated, 'Two kopi tiwus, please.'

'It's rare for people from Jakarta to come here. Mostly from small towns near here,' He said, reaching for two star fruit-like glasses in front of us.

'You're famous all the way to Jakarta,' I answered while grinning, trying to be sarcastic to Ben, who didn't feel offended at all. His eyes couldn't stop observing all of Pak Seno's movements in making the coffee.

Pak Seno laughed out loud. 'No waaay, how is that possible!'

In front of us were now served two glasses filled with steaming thick coffee.

'You might as well try the fries, young man. Please.'

I picked up a fried banana.

'Pak Seno sent his greetings. He also left a message that we cannot equate coffee with sugar cane juice. No matter how perfect the coffee you make, coffee is still coffee, it has a bitter side that you can't possibly hide. And that's where the greatness of kopi tiwus is... It provides a bitter side that makes you step back and think.'

The narrative reflects Indonesian coffee brewing method known as *kopi tubruk*. It means grinding roasted coffee beans, putting the ground coffee into a small glass, placing boiling water on it, and letting the coffee grounds sink slowly to the bottom (Arvian Et Al, 2018, p. 109; Redaksi Health Secret, 2012, p. 18). The small glass can be in the form of star fruit-like glass or the one with its bottom looking like star fruit cut which is made of thick glass and known as an antique glass for it was popular in 1950s to 1960s (serba vintage, 2019). The coffee put into it is supposedly sugar-free served to keep its bitter flavour to be

sipped for the bitterness does not last long (Redaksi Health Secret, 2012, pp. 34, 35; Sukendro, 2013, p. 27) and commonly accompanied by with fried foods, including fried banana (Asiah et al., 2023, p. 4). If *Kopi Tiwus* is narrated by Dee to be made quickly by Pak Seno without involving a variety of coffee brewing equipment and without adding any sugar to keep the coffee's bitter side, coffee brewing method used by him is *kopi tubruk* as a simple one.

Simple coffee brewing method can be found all over the world with different terms. It is used to brew all basic coffee and become standard for exploring coffee profiles in every world auction (Arvian Et Al, 2018, p. 111). However, due to its simplicity, it is considered unattractive for commercial promotion and is less competitive than other coffee brewing methods requiring a variety of coffee brewing tools which baristas are responsible for (Arvian Et Al, 2018, p. 111). Even so, the baristas do not only brew coffee in a complex way, but also in a simple way for they are expected to have a wide range of skills and knowledge of brewing coffee, creating memorable coffee experiences for customers, and maintaining a clean and organized workspace (Maspul, 2023, p. 11). Therefore, it should not come as a surprise that the baristas are vulnerable to pressure (Maspul, 2023, p. 12) which can be seen as one of pernicious effects of pervasive Eurocentrism hidden behind universalism which, as well as globalization, aims to homogenize (Robinson, 2003; Slater, 1992). With reference to Marx (1959, pp. 29–31), pressure takes place when they put their lives into coffee as an alien object against themselves, whereas their lives should belong to themselves as part of nature giving them pleasure. The pleasure can be expressed in the form of laughter resulting from unpressured activity (Kennedy, 2010, p. 86; Marx, 1959, p. 33). Based on Dee's narrative above, the laughter comes from Pak Seno when brewing *Kopi Tiwus*. The coffee can also make Ben laugh as narrated by Dee below.

*Kulihat Ben mengangguk samar. Dan di balik punggungnya, aku yakin ia akan tertawa lebar. Pada kaca besar kedai, tampak siluet tangan yang kembali menari di dalam bar, menyiapkan peralatan untuk esok hari, membangunkan Filosofi Kopi yang lama diam bagai bubuk kopi tanpa riak air. Seduhan secangkir kopi tiwus malam ini mengawinkan lagi keduanya* (Dee,

2006, p. 29)

I saw Ben nod faintly. And behind his back, I was sure he would laugh out loud.

In coffee shop's large glass window, silhouettes of hands could be seen dancing in the bar again, preparing equipment for the next day, awakening *Filosofi Kopi* which had long remained silent like coffee grounds without a ripple in the water. Brewing a cup of *Kopi Tiwus* tonight remarried the two of them.

As the globe sustains globalization which produces homogenization and differentiation involving sublation of various social formations to an overarching global mode of production (Majumder, 2017, p. 19), it means that in the globe illustrated by *Filosofi Kopi*, European coffee illustrated by *Ben's Perfecto* together with a variety of popular espresso drinks can be juxtaposed with Java coffee illustrated by *Kopi Tiwus*. Consequently, complex coffee brewing method which refers to method and machine invented and improved by Europeans which lead to espresso and the variety involving other coffee brewing equipment and tools (Atmiko, 2020, pp. 70–71) can be alternated with simple coffee brewing method which refers to *kopi tubruk* which does not require use of espresso machine to make thick coffee for it can be brewed manually (Ardianti & Dwiatmoko, 2022, p. 485). Indeed, European coffee made with the former is homogenized one, because it is most widely sold in coffee shops around the world, including in Indonesia currently (Atmiko, 2020, p. 68). However, European coffee can be set side by side with Java coffee which was homogenized one, because it was all over Europe and ranked the highest in the world coffee trade when Java Island, Indonesia was under Dutch colonialism applying forced cultivation system in 1698-1699 (Redaksi Health Secret, 2012, pp. 23–24). In regard to it, Dee's narrative of *Kopi Tiwus* being brewed by Pak Seno and Ben with laughter indicates that Java coffee in post-colonial period of the country is brewed in an unoppressed form of labor demonstrated by the simple coffee brewing method.

## CONCLUSION

Following analysis using Spivak's planetarity, it is found that Java coffee is commodified through

interaction between global agents and a planetary subject who takes route from the planet to the globe and the one between a planetary subject and global agents who take route from the globe to the planet. Through their interactions, knowledge of features of Java coffee comprising well-grown in a fertile land, the highest quality type of coffee, and brewed in a simple way can be exchanged, so the coffee becomes a commodity to generate capital which can be globalized as well as European coffee. Since Spivak states that the planet is not in a neat contrast with the globe, planetarity does not involve obliteration of homogenization, but keeps homogenization and differentiation in alterity making planetarity “in excess” of globalization of capital reflected in commodifying Java coffee in post-colonial period of Indonesia in an unoppressed form of labor or without the alienation of labor. With larger coffee plantations on Java Island, Indonesia equipped with information and assistance of coffee cultivation technology, the commodification can increase competitiveness of its coffee in the global market.

## STATEMENT OF COMPETING INTEREST

Herewith the author declares that this article is totally free from any conflict of interest regarding the data collection, analysis, and the editorial process, and the publication process in general.

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